



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

APRIL 13, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Rebecca Cooper	Designated Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Cortney Kirk	Designated Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Heidi Cron	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Cortney Kirk at 6:01pm and adjourned at 7:22pm. As authorized by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Co-Chair and Director of Planning & Zoning Sarah Lewis designated Senior Planner Rebecca Cooper to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting. Co-Chair & Director of Public Space & Urban Forestry Luisa Oliveira designated Cortney Kirk to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting.

DESIGN REVIEW: 495 Columbia

(continued from March 23, 2021)

David Enrique presented for the applicant team. Mr. Enrique focused on the feedback the team received from the UDC at the last meeting; including Columbia Street activation, façade materiality, West façade design progress, and the public realm.

The large lobby and windows and possibly the addition of accordion doors or a nano wall will open up the first floor to activate the space. The first floor program has not yet been determined yet, but they expect the entirety of the face of the building to be active.

In the preferred Option 1, the materiality of the building will be modern with a combination of a textured panel, concrete or tactel, in combination with metal frames and a glass curtain wall. They have created a greater density in the frame language, by adding larger frame material in the vertical design. They have brought the penthouse forward to the face of the building, lessened the size of the center portion of the main wall, and broke up the large forms by adding texture. They have also started to think about the sustainability aspects of the building. The team is studying the possibility of integrating photovoltaic panels, as this will be a LEED Platinum building. They are cognizant of the abutters on Webster Street and do not want to place the panels anywhere that they will create a glare.

Ian Ramey discussed the updated public realm plan; including maximizing the landscape frontage along the streetscape, the transition to complete streets, and the consideration of the width of the streetscape along Webster Ave. The updated landscape plan included street trees placed 40' apart with 25' wide planting strips adjacent to each tree. They plan to landscape about 40% of their 700 linear feet of frontage that wraps around three sides of the building. The streetscape improvements included removing utility poles along Webster Ave to be able to increase the sidewalk width from 6' to about 8'.

The Commission and applicant team discussed how to create a complete street which includes bicycle lanes in both directions, the lack of a short term drop-off/delivery area, and pedestrian access in the passage under the building. They also touched upon the retail/café space in the lobby, the loading/service area, the 70% fenestration requirement for the first floor, the placement of the exhaust vents, and the requirement for canopies over storefronts and lobbies. They reviewed the façade design and the mechanical penthouse. The Commission and applicant team then discussed the public realm and proposed green wall, the proposed building materials, and the PV panels. Although the Commission felt the design had come a long way, they still felt it fell short of several zoning and design requirements.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the Option 1 massing presented.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that all the feedback given this evening is incorporated into the modified façade design Option 1.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (0-3) to recommend that all the design guidelines of the district are satisfied. The Commission felt that the following guidelines were not met: lobby on Webster Street, Penthouse distinction, awnings and canopies, at-grade exhaust, and complete streets.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Cron, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that all the guidance and modifications offered this evening is incorporated as additional guidance.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED
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NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.